

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (currently amended) A connection apparatus for automatically connecting a connection source over a network to a predetermined connection destination using a trigger signal issued upon initial power-up; wherein the connection source is a printer and the predetermined connection destination is a service center server to provide automated maintenance for said printer over said network;

wherein said connection source comprises:

information about said predetermined connection destination; and

connecting means for making a connection request to said predetermined connection destination based on said information about said predetermined connection destination and, given a permission, for automatically connecting to said connection destination; said connection request including a connection source identification for identifying said connection source; and

wherein said predetermined connection destination includes plural connection source identifications for identifying a plurality of connection sources; the predetermined connection destination comprises:

receiving means for receiving said connection request from said connection source;

judging means which, upon interpreting said connection request, judges whether said connection source is a predetermined connection source or not by checking said connection source identification against said plural connection source identifications; and

permission granting means which, if said judging means judges said connection source to be a predetermined connection source, grants connection permission to said

connection source.

Claim 2. (original) A connection apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said connection source is connected to said connection destination without intervention of an Internet service provider being contracted.

Claim 3. (original) A connection apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said connection request constitutes a request for connection to an Internet service provider as well as a request for connection to said receiving means.

Claims 4-5. (canceled)

Claim 6. (currently amended) A connecting method for automatically connecting a connection source over a network to a predetermined connection destination using a trigger signal issued upon initial power-up; wherein the connection source is a printer and the predetermined connection destination is a service center server to provide automated maintenance for said printer over said network; the method comprising the steps of:

setting information about said predetermined connection destination to said connection source in advance;

causing said connection source to make a connection request to said predetermined connection destination based on said information about said predetermined connection destination; said connection request including a connection source identification for identifying said connection source;

causing said predetermined connection destination to receive said connection request from said connection source in order to judge whether said connection source is a predetermined connection source or not upon interpreting said connection request; the predetermined connection destination including plural connection source identifications for identifying a plurality of connection sources; the predetermined connection destination judging whether said connection source is a predetermined connection source by checking said connection source identification against said plural connection source identifications;

if said connection source is judged to be a predetermined connection source by said judging means, then granting connection permission to said connection source; and connecting said connection source to said predetermined connection destination.

Claim 7. (original) A connecting method according to claim 6, wherein said connection source is connected to said connection destination without intervention of an Internet service provider being contracted.

Claim 8. (original) A connecting method according to claim 6, wherein said connection request constitutes a request for connection to an Internet service provider as well as a request for connection to said connection destination.

Claims 9-10. (canceled)

Claim 11. (currently amended) A computer-readable program storage medium used

for a connecting method for automatically connecting a connection source over a network to a predetermined connection destination, which stores a program with connecting functions, using a trigger signal issued upon initial power-up; wherein the connection source is a printer and the predetermined connection destination is a service center server to provide automated maintenance for said printer over said network; said program comprising the steps of:

setting information about said predetermined connection destination to said connection source in advance;

causing said connection source to make a connection request to said predetermined connection destination based on said information about said predetermined connection destination; said connection request including a connection source identification for identifying said connection source;

causing said predetermined connection destination to receive said connection request from said connection source in order to judge whether said connection source is a predetermined connection source or not upon interpreting said connection request; the predetermined connection destination including plural connection source identifications for identifying a plurality of connection sources; the predetermined connection destination judging whether said connection source is a predetermined connection source by checking said connection source identification against said plural connection source identifications;

if said connection source is judged to be a predetermined connection source by said judging means, then granting connection permission to said connection source; and

connecting said connection source to said predetermined connection destination.

Claim 12. (original) A computer-readable program storage medium according to claim 11, wherein said program further comprises a connecting function for connecting said connection source to said connection destination without intervention of an Internet service provider being contracted.

Claim 13. (original) A computer-readable program storage medium according to claim 11, wherein said program further comprises a connecting function whereby said connection request is deemed to constitute a request for connection to an Internet service provider as well as a request for connection to said connection destination.

Claims 14-15. (canceled)